

My name is Maman Cooper and I am supporting SB 284. Not passing this bill will have severe impacts in the people in our communities. I hear and understand why people may be against passing this bill. Perhaps it is because America needs to take care of its own citizens. Or because the people the bill affects came to this country "illegally."

As a daughter of a refugee who lived in a refugee camp and came to this country the "right way," I witnessed at a young age the struggle people go through to leave their home country to come to the U.S. and resettle to other places.

It is not an easy and simple choice. It is difficult uprooting one's life and that of their families. I can never relate to someone who comes to this country undocumented; I have great level of respect for the optimism to give themselves and their families a better future to the extent that many times, they sacrifice to come to this country even in an illegal way.

I would say, based on my experience as someone who came here with their families, deciding to move to another place from one's homeland is a serious decision. People do not make that decision lightly.

People come to the United States for safety. I can understand the need to focus on one's own citizens and perhaps punish people who didn't come here the way that we consider legal.

The people this bill affects are our friends, our neighbors, they are students that those of us in education come across daily.

I appeal with compassion as I say this, let's not punish someone further who went through so much to come here because they find safety in this country. Let's not punish children because their parents brought them here "illegally."

Let's protect people at all costs even if that costs us something.

As a Christian, the Bible teaches me that ***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it; You shall love your neighbor as yourself."***

As people, we spend so much time fighting over materialistic things that we would all die and leave behind in this world. We live by so many rules and regulations instead of just loving people.

You don't have to be a Christian to agree to take care of those in need, but as a human, I hope you can understand that we're all vulnerable in this world. And we should love people and take care of them even when we don't necessarily approve of the way they arrived in this country.

Some day, you don't know what will happen to you and that may cost you to leave your homeland or neighborhood to turn to others.

We should pass this bill because it's a simple act of love for our community members.

Thank you!